Export of natural gas

*290. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL) is exporting naural gas; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Legislation on family Planning

*291 SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to enact a legislation on family planning;

(b) if so, the details of the constraints encountered in the implementation of the family planning programme; and

(c) whether the proposed legislation is likely to have uniform application in the country and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI M. L. FOTEDAR): (a) to (c) Some of the major constraints encountered in the implementation of the Family Welfare Programme are summarised below:—

(i) Socio-economic and cultural milieu favouring large families.

(ii) Strong son preference.

(iii) Low female literacy rate.

(iv) Low female age at marriage.

(v) High infant mortality rate.

(vi) Inadequate popular participation and community involvement in the programme.

(vii) Deficiencies in quality and outreach of services in some parts of the country, particularly in remote rural areas and urban slum pockets.

(viii) Resource constraints.

In the draft Action Plan formulated to revamp and energise the National Family Welfare Programme the above mentioned constraints have been taken note of and the thrust of the Plan is to overcome them in consultation with the State Governments/UTs Administration and other concerned Ministries/ Departments of the Central Government.

There is no proposal to enact a legislation on Family Planning *per sua* because in a democratic set up like ours, Family Planning is a voluntary programme and it is not desirable, nor feasible, to have any element of coercion or compulsion. Social, economic and cultural constraints in implementation of the Family Welfare Programme will have to be overcome through proper administrative strategies, better inter-sectoral coordination and eliciting communiy participation.

Hiring of criminals by Punjab militants

*292. SHRI S. S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Punjab militant have hired criminals from certain places of U.P. with a view to liquidate some leaders in the Capital and other places in the country; and

(b) if so, what action Government have taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI S. B. CHAVAN): (a) and (b) The Government does not have any specific information to indicate that Punjab militants have hired criminals from some places in Uttar Pradesh with a view to liquidate some leaders in the Capital and other places in the country. However, the Government is aware that several leaders and important persons have a threat to their security from Punjab militants. Adequate steps have been taken to provide security to these persons.